

Anniversary

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Â Â Â Â Â "You are inspired, you know that?" Lucy asked as she handed Kevin a glass of champagne.

Â Â Â Â Â "You have that affect on me," Kevin answered with a smile.

Â Â Â Â Â "I mean it," she insisted. "It was a wonderful idea to get married on the anniversary of the day we met."

Â Â Â Â Â "Well," Kevin said as he placed his untasted champagne on the dresser, "it only made sense. My life was permanently changed on February 17th, 1994." Slipping his arms around her he added, "It seemed only appropriate that we officially recognize the date."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Lucy leaned into him and smiled, "And I am so impressed that you just remembered off the top of your head what date we met."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Kevin kissed her gently and whispered, "I could no more forget that night than the stars could forget the moon."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Lucy sighed, "Doc, if you don't cut it out we are never going to make it out of here for our honeymoon."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Well, in that case," Kevin smiled, leaning toward her. Kissing her neck he murmured, "You are as memorable as a Mediterranean sunset and twice as beautiful; never in the history of the world has there been a woman who sparkles with such radiance, illuminating all the darkness with such seductive exuberance."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Oh my," Lucy exhaled slowly, wrapping her arms around Kevin's neck even more tightly. "Who says we have to go away for a honeymoon?"

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> <p>^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Lucy curled up tightly against Kevin, as she traced her hand lightly across his chest. "So, Doctor Collins, did we miss our flight?"<p>

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Kevin smiled. "We sure did, Mrs. Collins."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "'Mrs. Collins.'" Lucy giggled. "I can't believe we finally managed to do it. I am Mrs. Doctor Kevin Collins. I was beginning to think we were cursed again."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Bite your tongue," Kevin said. "Any curse that was placed on us we broke years ago -- right around the time I cracked my skull in your bathtub."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I guess so." Lucy propped herself up. "After all, look at us. We did it."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Kevin chortled, "It only took five years."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ The delighted grin melted from Lucy's face. "Do you realize that never before, not once in my entire life, have I had a relationship that lasted five years. For all the times I've been married, there wasn't a single person who stuck with me for as long, or through as much as you did."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I can't help it," Kevin smirked. "I'm addicted."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I'm being serious, Doc. No one ever loved me for me before. Certainly not like you do. From that first night at the Outback through everything -- Damain, Grace, Ryan, Scully, Scott, Rex -- no one has ever inspired me or challenged me or fought with me or infuriated me or loved me the way that you have. And I know that I don't always appreciate you enough, and I know that I put you through hell with the whole Rex thing, and I am so sorry for that. I know

it's hard for you to understand how I could have married that reptile, and I know it hurt you, but it was because of you that I could do it."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I really wish you wouldn't say that, Lucy," Kevin warned her quietly, obviously uncomfortable with the memory.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "No, Kevin, not like that -- that's not what I mean. What I mean is that never before in my life could I ever count on anyone, even my Aunt Charlene -- who loved and raised me. I didn't know how to trust someone like that. I couldn't just give someone my heart and know that they would always value my vulnerability. But you did. And I will spend the rest of our life making that nightmare up to you; not just because it hurt you, but because if it hadn't been for the fact that I finally understand what it's like to be loved, we never would have saved Serena from Rex. It was because I knew that no matter how angry or hurt you got, I could count on you. I may not have deserved your love and support, but I had it. And that was the only thing that gave me the strength to do what I did."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Kevin sighed and brushed a lock of hair from Lucy's face. "Lucy, you know I love you, but you need to remember something: I don't like being taken for granted anymore than you do. And I can't handle sitting back and watching you staking your own life and well-being on a scheme."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I know, Kevin. And I'm sorry. I wish we could have gone back and changed things -- come up with a different plan from the beginning, something, anything to keep you from having to go through what I put you through. But we can't."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Kevin looked at Lucy closely and took a deep breath. "Do you remember how you felt when you started having visions of Damian, and you believed that he had framed Katherine for his murder?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Of course I do. And that ungrateful little tramp couldn't even begin to muster a little appreciation for all the trouble I --"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Right," Kevin interrupted. "Lucy, that whole fiasco is the embodiment of everything I love about you, as well as everything that infuriates me about you. For as much as you hated Katherine, you were willing to risk your neck to save her. You didn't pay any attention to the consequences, you just jumped right in and did your best to fix things."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Which I did," Lucy gloated.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Kevin nodded slightly. "But also almost got yourself killed in the process."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "No, I didn't," Lucy scoffed. "Damian wouldn't have really --"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Yes, Lucy. He would." Kevin's voice overrode hers. "The more time went by, the more desperate Damian got. And he was dangerous. Don't do you remember the fights we had about that before you took off for Texas?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ The corners of her mouth dropped. "Of course I do. I hate fighting with you; all of our fights are burned into my memory and I can't get rid of them."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I hope you do remember them. I need you to remember them. I need you to remember what it felt like to have to look me in the eye and tell me that you didn't love me and that you were marrying Rex; I need you to remember what it was like to leave me in the dark while you and Luke concocted revenge plots against Joe Scully; I need you to remember how it felt to know that Damian could hire someone who could so easily drive wedges between us. Lucy, the mistakes we refuse to learn from are the ones we are destined to repeat."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "I do learn from them, Doc. All of them. It's a little hard not to."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "No you don't, Lucy, not really. What you learn from them is that, so far, each and every time you manage to come out the other side with no real permanent damage. You enjoy tempting the gods, Lucy. But how long do you think you can do that before the gods get angry enough to strike you down? Eventually there is a price that has to be paid. And the thought of losing you because you couldn't resist the urge to get involved in some scheme scares the hell out of me."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Kevin," Lucy started before Kevin interrupted her again.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "Lucy, do you remember how scared you were for me once you realized that I was the one stalking Felicia?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Lucy closed her eyes and nodded as a pained expression crossed her face.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "What was it that scared you most?" Kevin asked gently.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Lucy opened her eyes and looked at Kevin for a moment before speaking. "I was afraid of the pain you were in, not knowing how bad it was or what I could do to help; I was afraid that you would get so lost inside yourself that you'd never be able to find your way back out again."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "So you were afraid of losing me?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "More than anything else has ever scared me in my entire life."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "That's how I felt, Lucy. That's how I felt when you were kidnapped by Joe Scully, and when you went after Damian to San Antonio and, especially, when you married Rex. Can you imagine having to relive those same fears from after Jasmine Island over and over and over again?"

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Lucy's eyes darted to her fingers, resting on Kevin's chest. "No."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ "That is what I mean when I said that you don't learn,

Lucy. Does the fact that I came out of Jasmine Island alive and still with you mean that you'd be ok to do it again?"

Lucy shuddered slightly. "No," she repeated.

Kevin moved his hand up her back and caressed her shoulder. "Lucy, I'm not faulting you for wanting to help Scott and Serena. You have the biggest heart I've ever seen, and that is part of what I love so much about you. But I need you to remember that what affects you, affects me. It's not an either/or situation. Where one goes, we both go. And I just need to you stop and think before rushing headlong into a scheme that is going to hurt us."

Lucy's gaze returned to Kevin's. "I hear what you're saying, Kevin. Really, I do. I just don't know how to do things any differently from the way I do them. I can't just sit back and watch someone I care about -- or even not care about, in Katherine's case -- get hurt. Especially not Serena."

Kevin stopped her again. "I'm not saying do nothing, Lucy. What I'm saying is that you rush into things without first considering other alternatives. Getting involved with Rex was not the only choice we had -- but it was an adrenaline rush and a challenge and so you wanted to do it. You didn't want to find another course of action." Kevin grimaced. "And Scott egging you on certainly didn't help."

"We're not going to have another fight about Scott, are we?"

Kevin stared at Lucy intently for a moment. "Not tonight." Lucy smiled. "But," Kevin warned, "Scott is and issue that you are not going to be able to avoid indefinitely, Lucy. Just answer me one thing first: do you think that Scott would have let Dominique get close to someone like Rex, even for Serena's sake?"

Lucy cocked her head and sighed. "No, of course not."

Kevin nodded. "Then I rest my case."

"But," Lucy added firmly, "Dominique would have done it anyway."

Kevin looked at her, shook his head and sighed again. "Oh, Lucy..."

Lucy nodded and smiled her best innocent smile at Kevin. "Do you think maybe we could shelf this discussion for now. You see, today I just married the sexiest, most handsome and irresistible man on the planet --"

"You did?"

Lucy grinned. "I did. And he's got this fabulously inventive mind. And he's always trying to come up with new ideas for ways to..." Lucy leaned in and began nuzzling his neck.

"To what?" Kevin prompted.

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Lucy looked up at him and smiled again. "To get the creative juices flowing."

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ Kevin grinned and pulled her closer. "That's one way of putting it, Mrs. Collins."

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